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My apologies to Council Members Pines for my late submission.

To start, the State of Hawai'i profits greatly from our cultural heritage and economically. If this Bill will increase the number of important cultural sites with proper designation we must support it.

What reason can be mustered in opposition?

Is it too costly to provide proper signage? Will the cost ever compare to the immense economic profit derived from our heritage? The answer is surely no.

It takes but a glance at the website of the Hawaii Tourism Authority and Hawaii Visitors Bureau to understand just how important "heritage tourism" is to this state. Every hotel lu'au, every "aloha", every plastic lei and every Japanese hula halau on a visit - is due to our cultural heritage. If you reflect on the history of Waikiki, it is clear that "Hawaiian-ness" is what made it the destination of choice. There are 5 star hotels and beaches all over the world, but Hawaiian hotels are only in Hawai'i. Our visitors are eager to learn about Hawaiian Culture. No financial cost it too great to invest in our prosperity.

Should the Department of Parks and Recreation not be empowered to properly care take what they are already custodians of? Have these sites lost their meaning to us as a people? as a State? Again NO.

Aloha, ohana, malama 'aina and the great men and women of ancient Hawai'i make us who we are as a State. Hawaiian values are interwoven in our institutions and everyday interactions. Increasingly Kama'aina are looking into the past and discovering value, meaning and fulfillment. However, the Hawaiian culture and Hawaiian people are not gone! They are still here and their visibility is vital to the well being of our State. Every effort should be made to maintain their identity and revitalize it

Did you know that during the territorial years, improving public parks was used as cover to destroy important places?

It was the public park that destroyed the sacred Palace Moku'ula and it was the public park that threatened to destroy Queen Emma's Summer Palace. Today, our values have changed. By empowering our public parks to care for our history we can reinforce the fact that the modern State of Hawai'i is a responsible care taker of a past filled with meaning. It is a symbolic shift.

Will designation by signage/placard aid in education and preservation? YES.

I work with the Daughters of Hawai'i, the first historical preservation society in Hawai'i. Through the use of historical placard they were the first to designate Pali Lookout as an important site. Would it be the attraction it is now without that designation? Would it still exist? Designation is a powerful and fairly inexpensive tool. Through mere "designation" the Daughters have managed to preserve Kamehameha III's birth site and the Kukaniloko birthing stones. It was the Daughters who prevented a road from slicing Thomas Square in two. They then place a placard to commemorate its significance and thus safeguarded its existence forever.

In closing, this Bill represents a important change. A change that perhaps is overdue. It doesn't just empower the Department of Parks and Receptions to designate important sites, it shows that the people of Hawaii value their heritage and are willing to protect it with the simplest of actions - designation.

Mahalo nui,
Kailieka Cummings